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No Assurance Now

THE REPORT of a U.S. Senate investigating group has done nothing to raise public confidence in the official information on Russia's military capacity in Cuba.

The word from the Senate's Preparedness Subcommittee is that "there is reason for grave concern" that Cuban caves may still contain long-range missiles and bombers installed by the Russians.

This runs counter to the impression given by DEFENSE SECRETARY McNAMARA in his documented appraisal of the Cuban situation a few weeks ago.

At that time McNAMARA indicated the Russians had lived up to their agreement to remove their missiles and bombers. He also described heavy air surveillance work being carried out over Cuba by American planes—so many flights that it seemed nothing substantial could be placed on that island without our knowledge.

Now we cannot be sure. Not only have Cuban refugees brought stories of Russian might still in place on the island, but the Senate summary seems to contradict the military estimate given by McNAMARA.

Our intelligence people still believe the missiles and bombers have withdrawn—but the Senate group contends this view may be in error. We can certainly agree with the Senators' statement that "it is of the

greatest urgency to determine whether or not strategic missiles now are concealed in Cuba."

The Subcommittee's report was written by six Senators, representing both parties, after secret questioning of experts from the Central Intelligence Agency and military intelligence.

The report states that a "reasonably competent job was done" in rounding up information on the Cuban situation, but adds that "several substantial errors" apparently were made in evaluating the material gathered.

The intelligence men were criticized for being disinclined to believe the "ominous import" of the information, for being slow to accept the fact that Soviet missiles were in fact in Cuba and for their apparent tendency to "discredit and downgrade" refugee and exile reports.

Perhaps PRESIDENT KENNEDY and SECRETARY McNAMARA still have confidence in their intelligence reports and the conclusions drawn by their staff experts. But frankly, we are beginning to wonder. Either our intelligence is doing the job, as McNAMARA indicated, or it is falling down on the job, as the Senators imply.

If the Senators are right, it's time to make some changes—before it's too late.